

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY - GYPSIES,
TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE CONSULTATION****1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 The South East Regional Assembly is holding a public consultation on options for allocating new Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches across the south east region. Four options for the distribution are put forward. This report is to consider the Council's response to the consultation document.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2006 and 2007 Government introduced new rules requiring all local authorities to allocate sufficient legal stopping places for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. To identify how much space is needed local authorities have carried out Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments. New Forest District Council has joined with other Hampshire Authorities, including Southampton and Portsmouth, and the Isle of Wight, in commissioning this work.
- 2.2 In addition, the South East Regional Assembly is reviewing part of the South East Plan to:
- Address the under provision of legal stopping places;
 - Improve conditions for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople; and
 - Reduce unauthorised camping and development and the associated problems and costs.
- 2.3 The South East Plan will identify how many spaces are needed in each council area, but not the location of sites. Local councils are responsible for identifying suitable locations through their own Local Development Frameworks. Each council will have its own timetable, and its own public consultation arrangements. Government has asked local councils to find suitable locations as quickly as possible, and some have already started. New Forest District Council would address any additional provision it was required to make through future development plan documents. The Core Strategy document will have a criteria based policy to guide the search for future site allocations, as required.

3. THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

- 3.1 The key questions the consultation document seeks to address include:
- Is 1,064 spaces for Gypsies and Travellers a suitable 10 year target for the South East Region?
 - Is 276 spaces for Travelling Showpeople a suitable 10 year target for the region? and
 - Which of four options (set out below) gives the most suitable spread of spaces across the region?

- 3.2 The options suggested give different ways to meet the overall number of spaces.

Option A

New spaces should ALL be provided as close as possible to where Gypsies and Travellers currently live. This may mean some council areas have no spaces.

Option B

New spaces should ALL be in the same general areas where Gypsies and Travellers currently live. Neighbouring councils would share the duty for providing new spaces but some council areas would have none.

Option C

HALF the new spaces should be in the same general areas where Gypsies and Travellers currently live. The other half would be spread across the region to make sure that all areas provide some spaces.

Option D

MOST new spaces should be in the same general areas where Gypsies and Travellers currently live. A quarter would be spread across the region to make sure that all areas provide some spaces.

- 3.3 The report states that Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople spaces are currently unevenly spread in the region. Options A and B would continue that uneven spread, with most new spaces in areas where there are already a higher number of spaces (in Surrey and Kent). Options C and D would share provision of spaces more widely, taking account of job opportunities, services and environmental constraints in each area.
- 3.4 Appendix 1 sets out the pitch and unit requirement under each of the four options.

4. OFFICER COMMENT ON CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

- 4.1 The Council commissioned jointly with other Hampshire authorities a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, which was published in June 2007, and a Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment, published in March 2008. These assessments examined the needs for accommodation arising in the area, as well as potential in-migration to Hampshire from neighbouring areas of Wiltshire and West Sussex. It is considered that these reports should form the context for considering and responding to the current SEERA consultation.

Gypsies and Travellers

- 4.2 The Hampshire Assessment was based on sample surveys of the gypsy and traveller communities, the results of which were grossed to the known population of gypsy and traveller households across the site-based community. The consultants' report recommended that the distribution of new pitches should be on the basis of preferences expressed through the survey, as this is generally in line with housing needs assessments. The assessment found a relationship between existing locations for accommodation and desired locations, and therefore it recommended that the extension of existing sites should be considered as a way of providing for new pitches.
- 4.3 Taking into account the supply of vacancies on existing sites, the research found a need for an additional 44 pitches in Hampshire between 2006 and 2011. There was a generally low level of need for additional permanent pitches in New Forest District (3) indicating that households are well catered for on the Bury Brickfields site, near Marchwood.
- 4.4 The SEERA consultation has extended the period for considering the need for new pitches from 2011 (the time period covered by the Hampshire Assessment) to 2016. Thus, to cover the additional five year period, the pitch requirement for Hampshire has increased to 100, and that for New Forest District increased to 5. This figure is the basis for **Option A** of the SEERA consultation.
- 4.5 No figures have been provided for Hampshire under **Option B** of the consultation. This is because this option provided for no difference in the figures from option A.
- 4.6 **Option C and Option D** provide for a redistribution of the provision of pitches across the region. In general, this has resulted in areas with large identified needs having some of their requirements redistributed to areas where there are lower identified needs. This means that some provision will not necessarily be made for new pitches in areas where needs have been identified, and households may need to move out of their preferred areas to neighbouring areas. Under both scenarios the proposed provision in Hampshire increases significantly, by 50% (Option D), or 100% (Option C). Provision for New Forest District increases to 6 pitches (Option D), or 8 pitches (Option C).

Travelling Showpeople

- 4.7 The Travelling Showpeople Assessment found that there was a need for 13 new sites to accommodate 111 accommodation units in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight by 2011. To cover the additional period considered for the SEERA consultation this figure has increased to 129 units. For New Forest District the identified need amounts to 5 units. This figure is carried forward in **Option A** of the consultation.
- 4.8 The consultation also contains an additional requirement to accommodate 42 families which could be attributed to any particular area. There is no additional requirement proposed for New Forest District resulting from this '**42 families**' "**Option**".

- 4.9 **Option C and Option D** provide for a redistribution of units across the region in the same way as is considered for the gypsies and travellers figures. Only under **Option C** does the requirement change from 5 to 4 for this District.

Conclusions

- 4.10 It is considered that Options C and D, which redistribute pitch / unit provision across the region, are not supported by an evidence-based needs assessment and would be contrary to the Council's own evidence on needs for both gypsies and travellers and for travelling showpeople. It is recommended therefore that Options C and D are not supported by this Council.
- 4.11 Based on the assessments of needs set out in the Hampshire Assessments, and the principle that provision should be made as close as possible to where the need arises, Option A offers the only approach which is justified by the available evidence and should be supported by this Council.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS / CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS / EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Consultation document is accompanied by a detailed Sustainability Report. This can be viewed on the website:
[southeast-ra.gov.uk/documents/consultations/5/sustainability_appraisal.pdf](https://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/documents/consultations/5/sustainability_appraisal.pdf)
- 5.2 Options for sites to accommodate the finally agreed provision of new pitches for gypsies and travellers will need to be identified through a Local Development Document under the Local Development Framework. This will be subject to sustainability appraisal and statutory consultation.
- 5.3 It should be acknowledged that the identification of additional pitches and sites to accommodate needs should reduce the incidents of unauthorised encampments.
- 5.4 The selective review of the South East Plan on this matter is designed to make provision for a recognised minority group.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None directly as a result of this report, but it should be acknowledged that gypsy and traveller provision on authorised sites should serve to reduce unauthorised encampments which would provide financial benefits through reductions in enforcements and removals where these arise on Council land.

7. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' COMMENTS

- 7.1 The Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder supports the recommendations contained in this report.

7.2 The Employment, Health & Wellbeing Portfolio Holder also fully supports the recommendation and the outcome of discussions after many years of deliberations.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Cabinet endorse paragraphs 4.10 and 4.11 of this report and agree Option A, that all new spaces should be provided as close as possible to where Gypsies and Travellers currently live, which may mean that some council areas have no spaces, as the Council's response to the SEERA consultation.

For Further Information Please Contact:

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Background Papers:

APPENDIX 1:

Extracts from: Annex B: Gypsy and Traveller residential pitch* options 2006-2016

County grouping and Authority	Option A Need as arises	Option B Local sustainability	Option C 50% pooled	Option D 25% pooled
Berkshire	78	78	78	78
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes	113	113	122	117
East Sussex	47	47	59	53
Hampshire Isle of Wight	100	100	205	153
Kent	320	320	241	281
Oxfordshire	42	42	88	65
Surrey	163	163	118	140
West Sussex	201	201	153	177
SOUTH EAST	1,064	1,064	1,064	1,064

Hampshire Authorities

County grouping and Authority	Option A Need as arises	Option B Local sustainability	Option C 50% pooled	Option D 25% pooled
Basingstoke & Deane	3	None provided	25	14
East Hampshire	0		16	8
Eastleigh	2		7	5
Fareham	2		7	4
Gosport	0		3	2
Hart	12		16	14
Havant	2		5	3
Isle of Wight	27		27	27
New Forest	5		8	6
Portsmouth City	8		10	9
Rushmoor	0		4	2
Southampton City	10		14	12
Test Valley	12		31	22
Winchester	17		32	25
Hampshire IoW	100	100	205	153

Note: * On average there are approximately 1.7 caravans per 'pitch'. Government guidelines say there should not normally be more than 20 pitches to a site.

Extract from: Annex C: Travelling Showpeople residential plot options 2006-2016

County grouping and Authority	Option A Need as arises	42 families Allocation by C/D approach	Option C 50% pooled plus share of 42	Option D 25% pooled plus share of 42
Berkshire	4	3	14	11
Buckinghamshire MK	21	5	31	28
East Sussex	0	3	11	7
Hampshire IoW	129	11	107	124
Kent	10	7	30	23
Oxfordshire	7	6	24	18
Surrey	58	3	40	51
West Sussex	5	4	19	14

Hampshire Authorities

County grouping and Authority	Option A Need as arises	42 families Allocation by C/D approach	Option C 50% pooled plus share of 42	Option D 25% pooled plus share of 42
Basingstoke & Deane	<u>21</u>	2	18	20
East Hampshire	<u>14</u>	1	12	14
Eastleigh	<u>6</u>	1	5	6
Fareham	<u>5</u>	1	4	5
Gosport	<u>3</u>	0	3	3
Hart	<u>9</u>	1	8	9
Havant	<u>4</u>	0	3	4
Isle of Wight	<u>0</u>	0	0	0
New Forest	<u>5</u>	0	4	5
Portsmouth City	<u>5</u>	0	4	5
Rushmoor	<u>4</u>	0	3	4
Southampton City	<u>8</u>	1	7	8
Test Valley	<u>23</u>	2	18	21
Winchester	<u>22</u>	2	18	20
Hampshire IoW	129	11	107	124

Note: Option A figures underlined: The RSS is required to provide district-level figures. The Assembly secretariat has generated a default district distribution as none provided, using Option C/D approach (Hampshire group authorities).